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RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6355
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000854

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: VP HASHIMI ON TAWAFUQ'S RETURN: THE PROBLEM IS
NOT WITH US

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: VP Tariq al-Hashimi told the Ambassador on March 16 "the problem is not with us" with respect to negotiations for Tawafuq's return to the GOI. Other parties also fed up with PM Maliki, he said, include Iraqiyya, the Kurds, the Sadrists, and the Fadhila Party. On the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), Hashimi would like to see scientific and cultural elements added during the negotiations. Hashimi discussed at great length the need for Iraq's Arab neighbors to increase their diplomatic presence in Baghdad, particularly at the ambassadorial level. Hashimi does not think Saudi Arabia will fulfill its promise to open an embassy or appoint an ambassador anytime soon. End summary.

NEGOTIATIONS ON TAWAFUQ'S RETURN IN STALL MODE

[¶2.](#) (C) In VP Hashimi's usual fashion, he deflected blame regarding the stalled negotiations between the GOI and Tawafuq claiming "the problem is not with us (Tawafuq)." He said Iraqiyya, the Kurds, the Sadrists, and the Fadhila Party are also fed up with PM Maliki. In response, the Ambassador emphasized that a serious effort is needed for Tawafuq's return to the GOI, and suggested the Presidency Council can take a constructive role to move negotiations forward. Hashimi then complained that PM Maliki does not "acknowledge that things need to be done in a better way." Hashimi summarized the demands raised with Maliki in the latest meetings between Tawafuq and the PMO, highlighting power sharing, especially among the ministries handling security, as the most important item. He said unless there is consensus on a long-term agreement on this issue, there will be problems. The Ambassador emphasized the USG is encouraging both sides (Tawafuq and PM Maliki) to resolve their differences.

STATUS OF SOFA/SFA NEGOTIATIONS

[¶3.](#) (C) The Ambassador discussed the SFA and SOFA with VP Hashimi at length, stressing that the political leadership should deal with the SFA on a parallel track to the technical negotiations on the SOFA (led by Deputy Foreign Minister Haj Hamoud). The Ambassador highlighted the Executive Council (plus one - KRG President Massoud Barzani) as a good mechanism to ensure agreement during the negotiations. Hashimi remarked that he submitted a letter to PM Maliki suggesting scientific and cultural elements be added to the SFA; however, he did not see any reference to it in the latest drafts.

VIEWS ON OIC MEETING AND RELATIONS WITH ARAB NEIGHBORS

[¶4.](#) (C) Hashimi shared his impressions of the 11th Session of the Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

(OIC) in Dakar, Senegal (March 13-14), saying "Islamaphobia" was one of the biggest topics. He added, "The extremists are causing people to link Islam with terrorism." Hashimi also talked about the controversy generated from some Danish cartoons in some Islamic countries, highlighting Pakistan in particular. In discussing Iraq's bilateral relations with Arab neighbors, VP Hashimi stressed that Iraq needs an Arab Ambassador in Baghdad. "Iraq is a founding member of the Arab League," said Hashimi, "but not a single Arab minister has visited." VP Hashimi added he met with Arab leaders from Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar at the OIC conference to convince them to establish stronger diplomatic ties with Iraq. Hashimi is doubtful that Saudi Arabia will establish a diplomatic mission or fulfill its promise to name an ambassador to Iraq.

CROCKER